

Rep. Gutierrez: Emily's story "emblematic of everything wrong with our immigration system"

March 30, 2011

Media Contact: Douglas Rivlin (202) 225-8203

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) – *Emily Samantha Ruiz, a four-year old American citizen who was mistakenly deported to Guatemala earlier this month, will return to New York City on Wednesday where she will be reunited with family. In a short time, Emily's story has become a huge international news story and has become a symbol for what is wrong with America's immigration system and the toll that deportations are taking on U.S. citizens and their families. Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL), Chairman of the Immigration Task Force of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, issued the following statement.*

We welcome Emily back home to her nation of birth and citizenship, but her story is a stain on America's proud history. In America, those who are born here are from here. Period. They are every bit as much a citizen of our nation as anyone else, yet with every generation, the children of immigrants meet skepticism, denial and resistance. In this case, the shunning was explicit

and extreme as the federal government -- of, by, and for the people -- did not acknowledge that Emily has every right and privilege of any other citizen.

Emily is emblematic of everything wrong with our immigration system and especially the inflexible rules and the plight of children. There are four million U.S. citizen children with parents who are undocumented and the federal government's only answer is to split those families apart. There are at least another million children who have grown up here but they themselves are undocumented and the government's only answer is deportation. Our immigration system provides no relief for these young Americans who will grow up and live their entire lives here but for whose families, every day, the threat of deportation is a reality.

While a broad set of immigration reforms is absolutely necessary to fix our broken immigration system in the long run, in the meantime we must ensure we do not needlessly deport the parents and spouses of U.S. citizens and others who are here working, raising families and contributing to our nation and economic recovery. As a nation, we must act.

#